

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair refused to air a program listing the names of US soldiers killed in Iraq, which honored the fallen in a war Sinclair fervently supports, on the grounds that it was "politically motivated". With their latest action they have made their own political agenda all too clear. Their blatant attempt to manipulate the outcome of the presidential election using public airwaves is an appalling and outrageous abuse of their license.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.